

X-MEN

MARK OF GAIN

MARVEL

#4
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TM



X-MEN NOIR: MARK OF CAIN #4



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by FRED VAN LENTE & DENNIS CALERO, with

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You get it?

I *get* it? I get it?



Does a bear ~~roam~~ in the woods?
Does your father suck ~~holes~~ in Hell as we speak?

I walk through ~~walls~~ walls, Wanda--



Yeah, okay, thanks, Kitty.

I got it.

Question is...

...once Tommy, Robert, whatever he's calling himself these days, is done screwing over Logan and company...

...are we next on the "Get ~~throttled~~" list?

Hey, there's one surefire way to guard against that.



WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP



WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP





...after you.

Hey.

Cyke.

I'm gonna be the one that gets you.

Just thought you'd like to know.



WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

Look at me.

I'm trembling, here...



...at the sight of pure, distilled **money** in my hands.

Reminds me of the old days, boosting jewelers on 47th Street with my brothers Alex and Gabe...

You always been loyal first to Xavier, Cyclops?



You never asked me **not** to be loyal to him that I can recall, Tommy.

I'm **Robert**...

Whatever.

His school for delinquents taught me more techniques, made me a better shot, and earned me more scratch than I ever could have outside.

And even more important than that...



...he has
friends in *high*
places.



What the hell...

...*is* this place...?

The Army Air Force calls it a "Dirigi-Carrier."

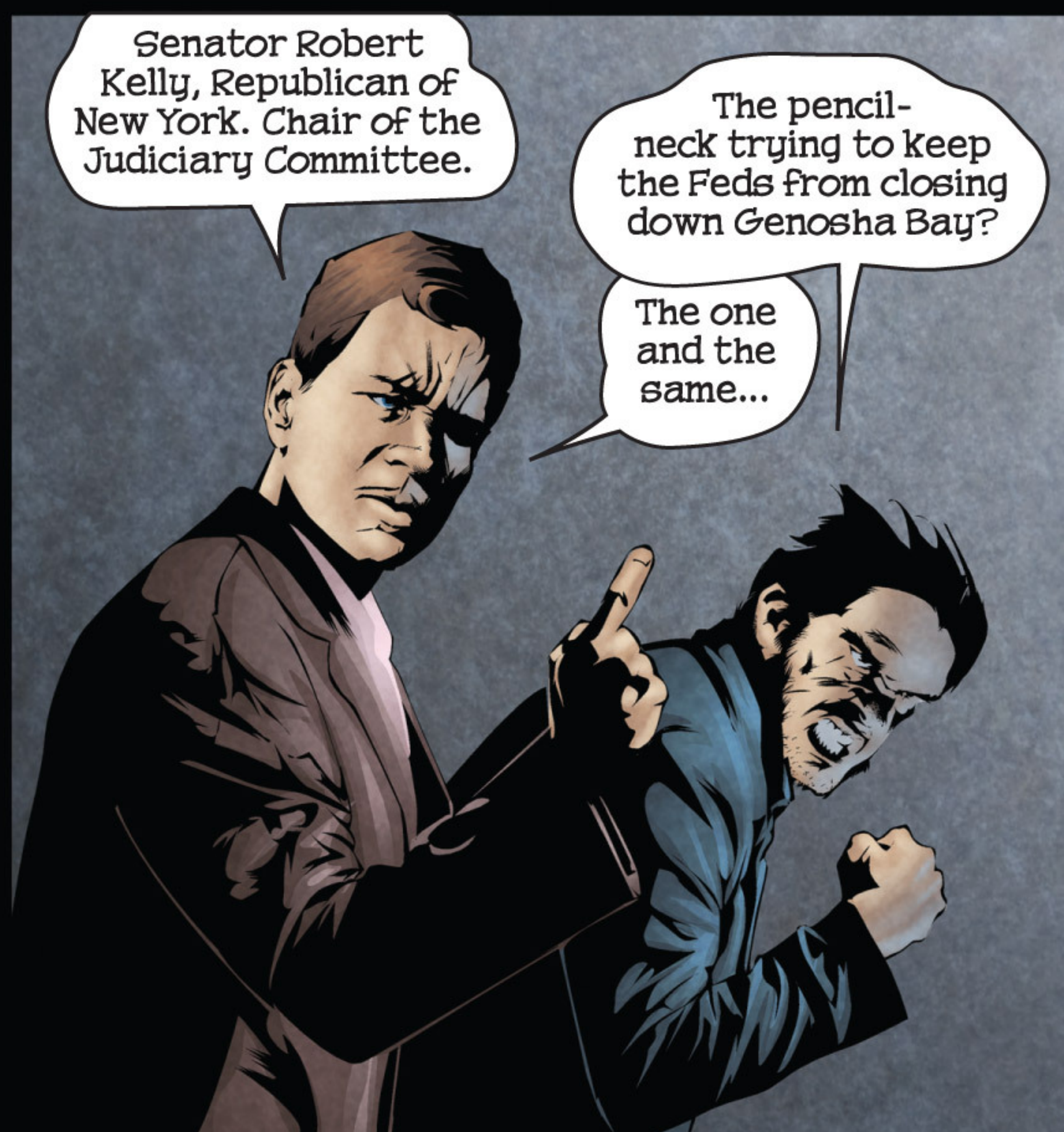


Gentlemen, welcome to O*N*E*...

...the Office of National Emergency.

Wheels I know.

So who the hell are you, bub?



Senator Robert Kelly, Republican of New York. Chair of the Judiciary Committee.

The pencil-neck trying to keep the Feds from closing down Genosha Bay?

The one and the same...



"...and I now recognize your voice from when you were waterboarding me back on Genosha Bay, Senator..."

WHERE'S THE GODDAMN CRIMSON GEM OF CYTTORAK YOU PIECE OF ~~SHIT~~



Okay. I'm at sea.

What does Senator Pothole care about our score?

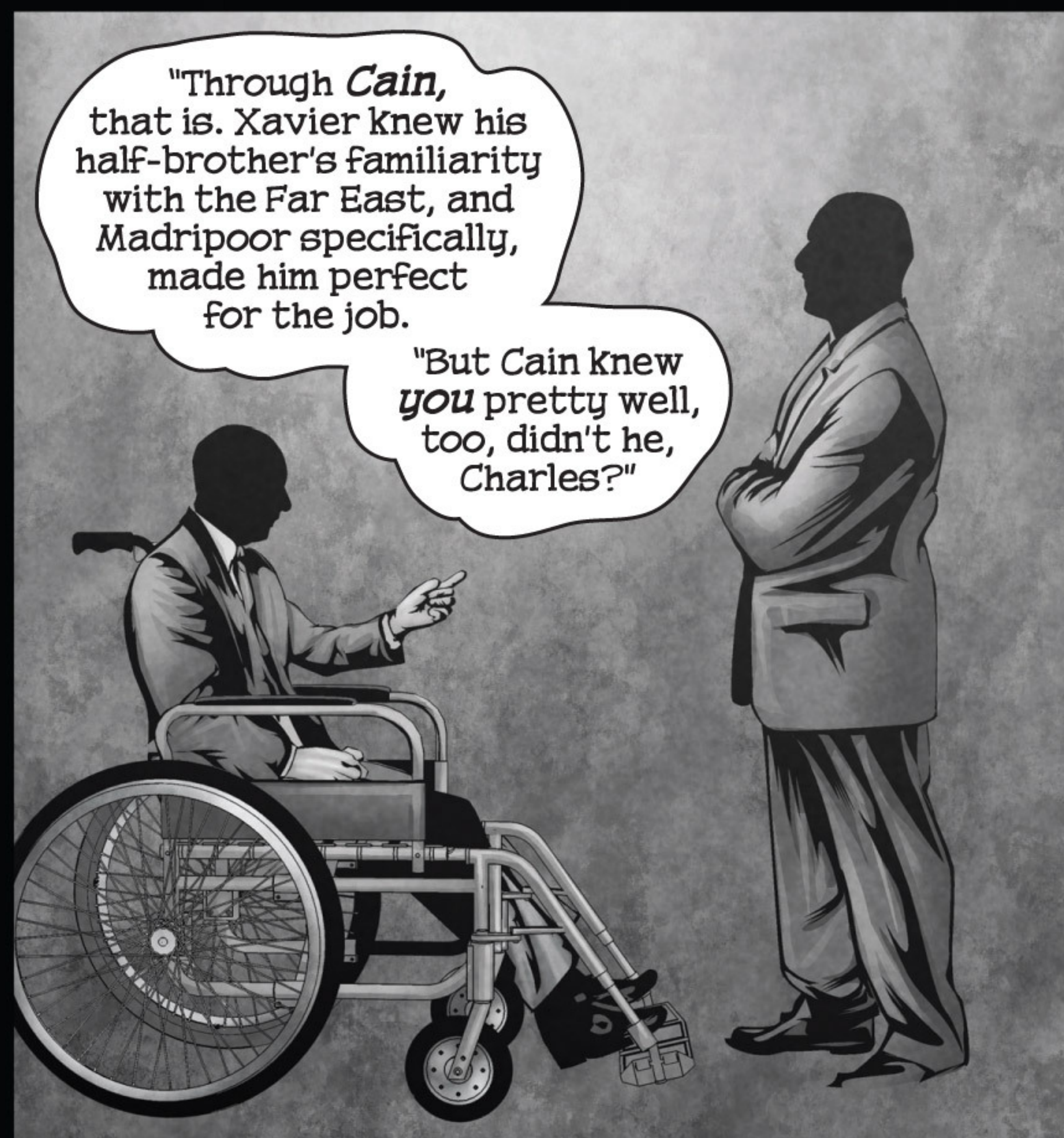
If you could string more than three sober hours together you might be able to follow along, Captain.

To everyone else it's obvious--



--*that's* who we were really working for all along, Logan.

O*N*E.



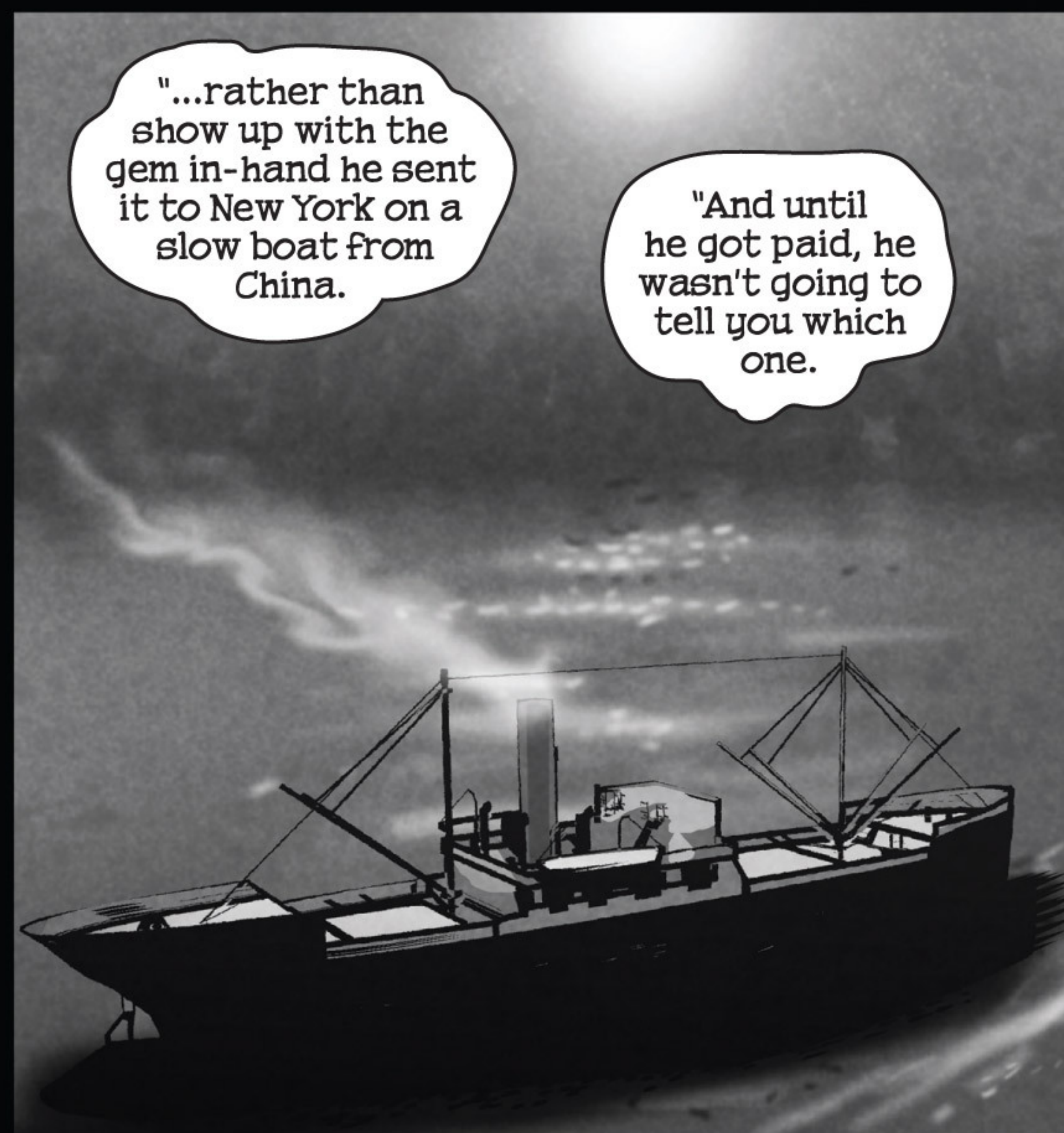
"Through *Cain*, that is. Xavier knew his half-brother's familiarity with the Far East, and Madripoor specifically, made him perfect for the job.

"But Cain knew *you* pretty well, too, didn't he, Charles?"



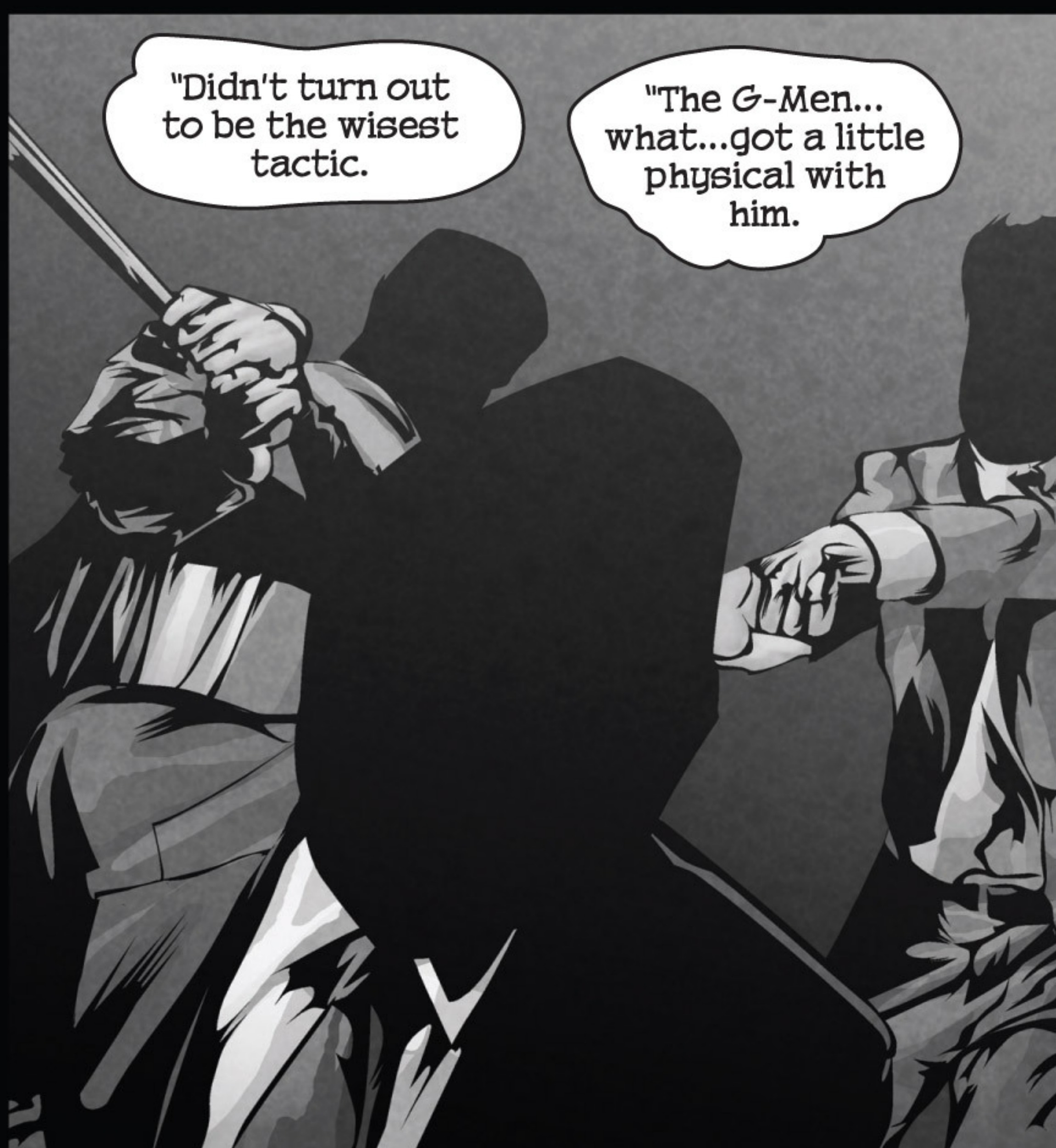
He knew he was working for some bad guys.

After he hired us to steal the gem from the natives, then double-crossed us...



"...rather than show up with the gem in-hand he sent it to New York on a slow boat from China.

"And until he got paid, he wasn't going to tell you which one.



"Didn't turn out to be the wisest tactic.

"The G-Men... what...got a little physical with him.



"Cain tried to make a run for it.

"Except, let me guess, once he arrived on Genosha Bay he was hooded like everyone else.

"He didn't entirely understand where he was being held...

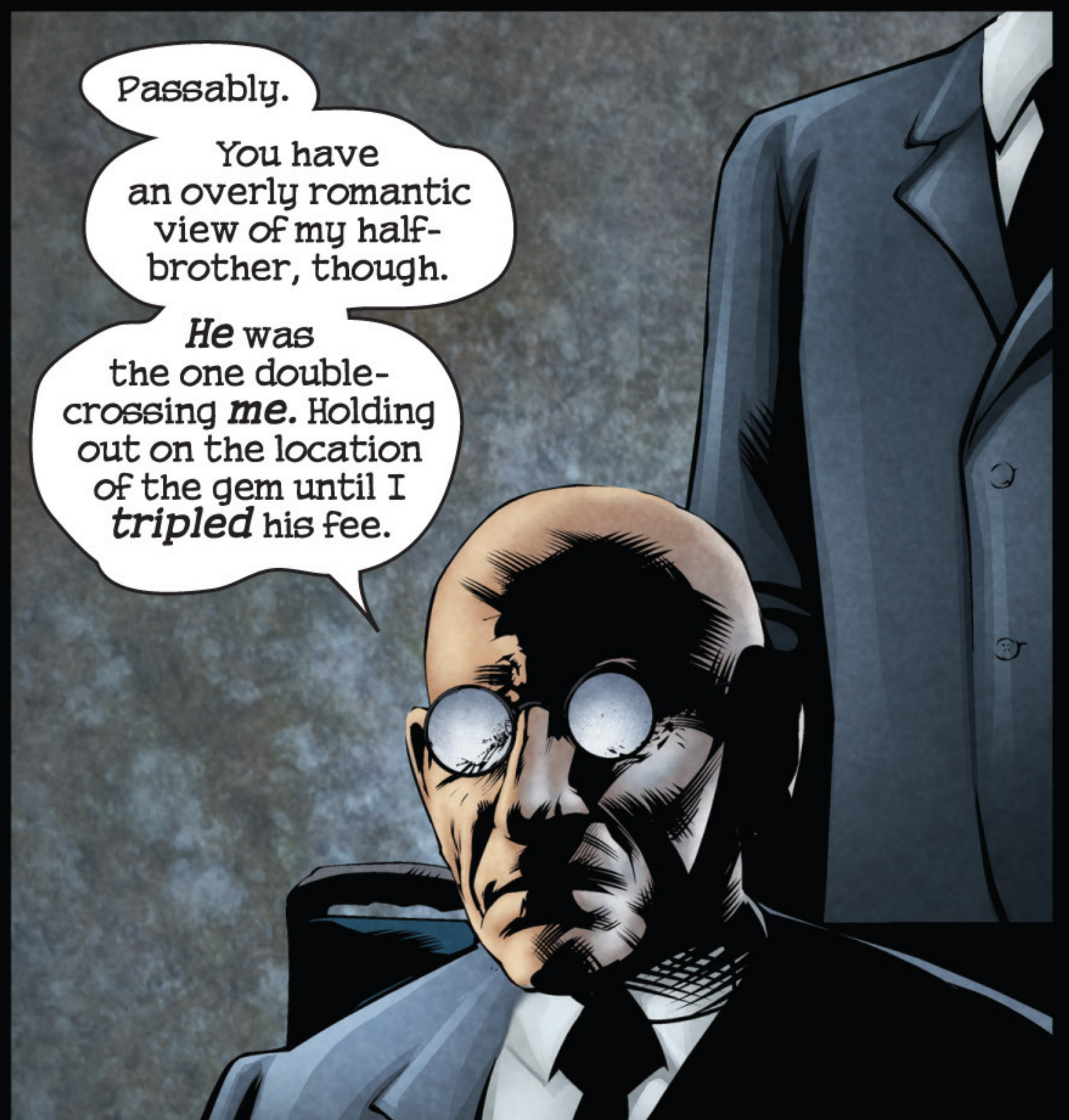
"...until he
found out the
hard way."





No wonder his body was found in an open field looking like it had been crushed by some mythical "Juggernaut."

How am I doing so far?



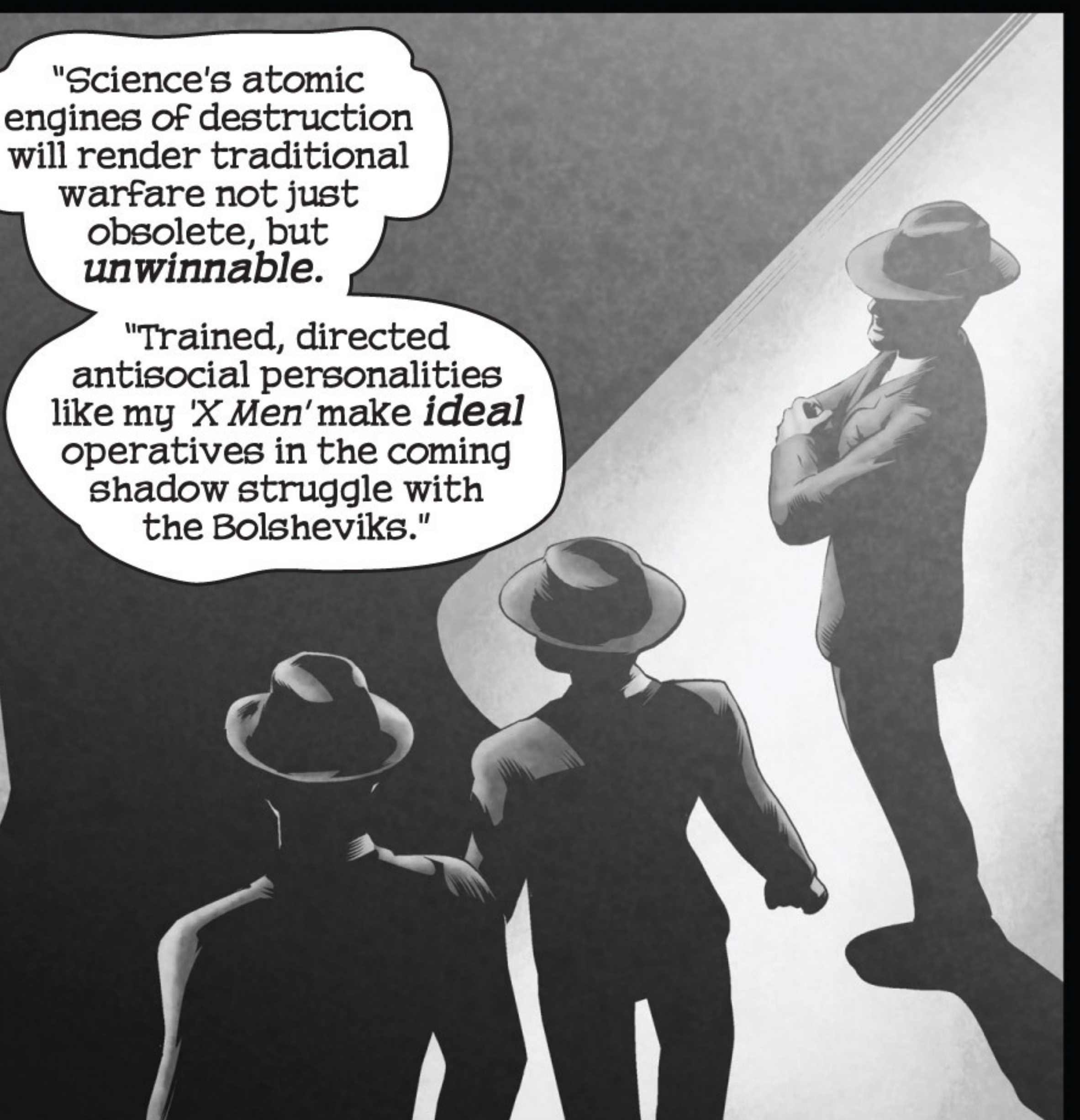
Passably.

You have an overly romantic view of my half-brother, though.

He was the one double-crossing *me*. Holding out on the location of the gem until I *tripled* his fee.

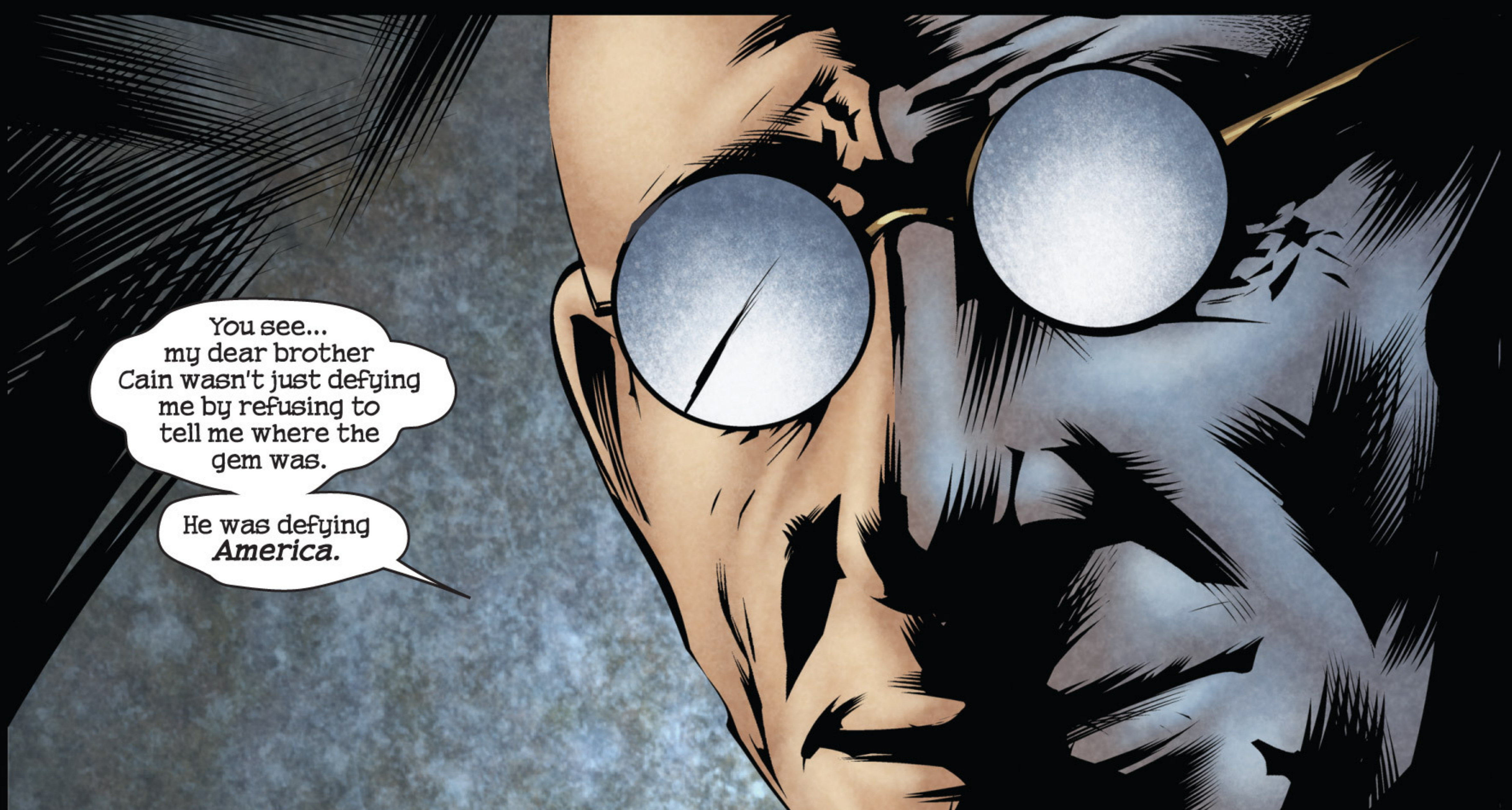


"My budget is already strained as it is, training the next generation of... 'soldiers' for O*N*E.



"Science's atomic engines of destruction will render traditional warfare not just obsolete, but *unwinnable*.

"Trained, directed antisocial personalities like my 'X Men' make *ideal* operatives in the coming shadow struggle with the Bolsheviks."



You see... my dear brother Cain wasn't just defying me by refusing to tell me where the gem was.

He was defying *America*.



I couldn't
give a rat's ~~tail~~
about America.

What does
this have to do
with the flamin'
gem?

With
the gem
itself?

Nothing,
really.



"More
what the gem
represents."

"When Prince
Baran of Madripoor
gets it back, he can
either magnanimously
return it to the autonomous
tribal regions in return
for greater political
influence there..."

"...or he
can hold the
gem *hostage* for
the same."

"Genosha Bay
has become a political
flashpoint, thanks to
the Congressional
hearings."

"O*N*E needs
to transfer its training
facility to a new, even more
secret extraterritorial
location."

"Prince Baran
could provide that
land to the U.S..."

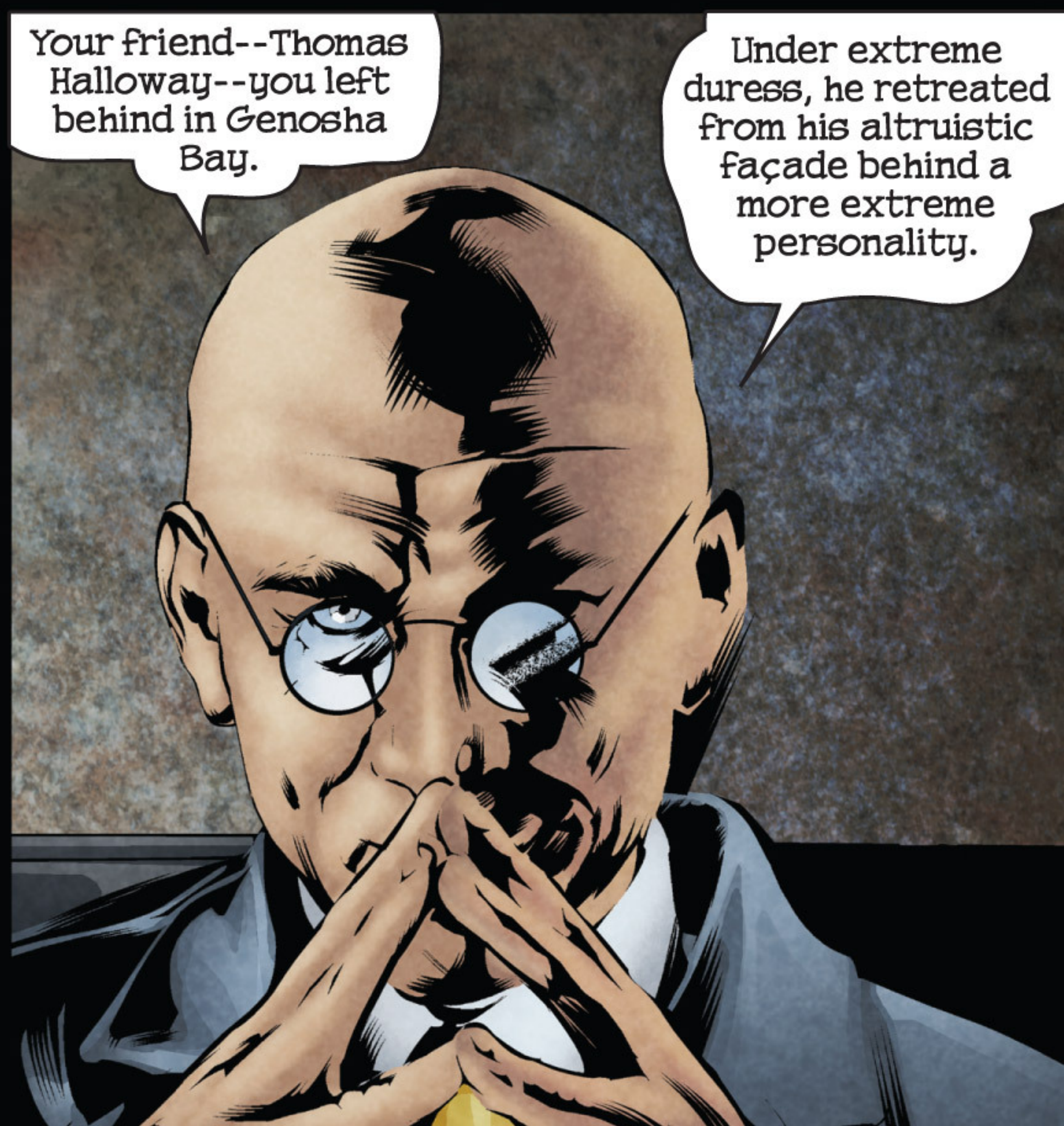
...*if* they
bring him the
gem."





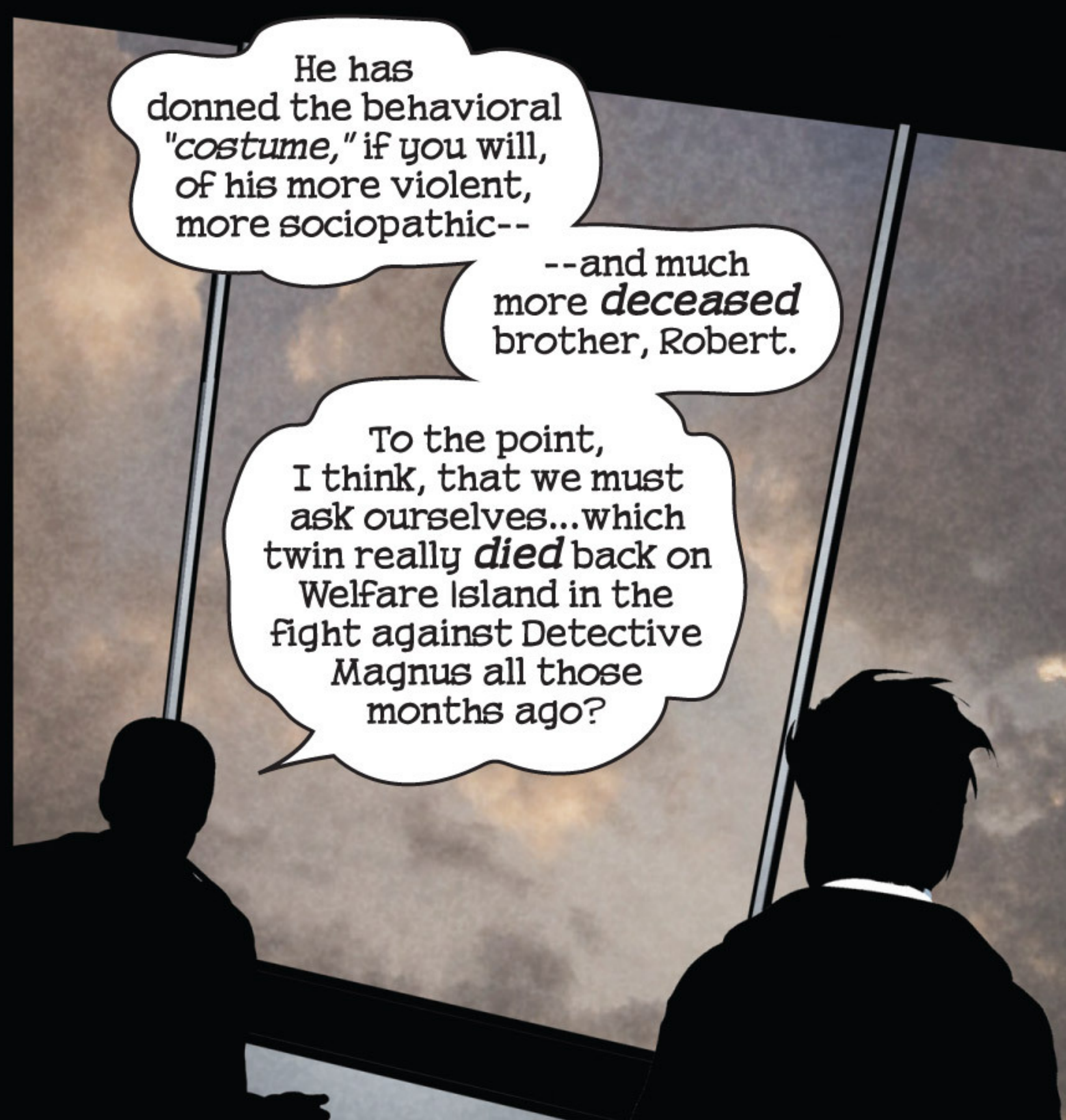
You just gonna leave us here--?

You direct your pleas into the *ether*, Captain.



Your friend--Thomas Holloway--you left behind in Genosha Bay.

Under extreme duress, he retreated from his altruistic façade behind a more extreme personality.



He has donned the behavioral "*costume*," if you will, of his more violent, more sociopathic--

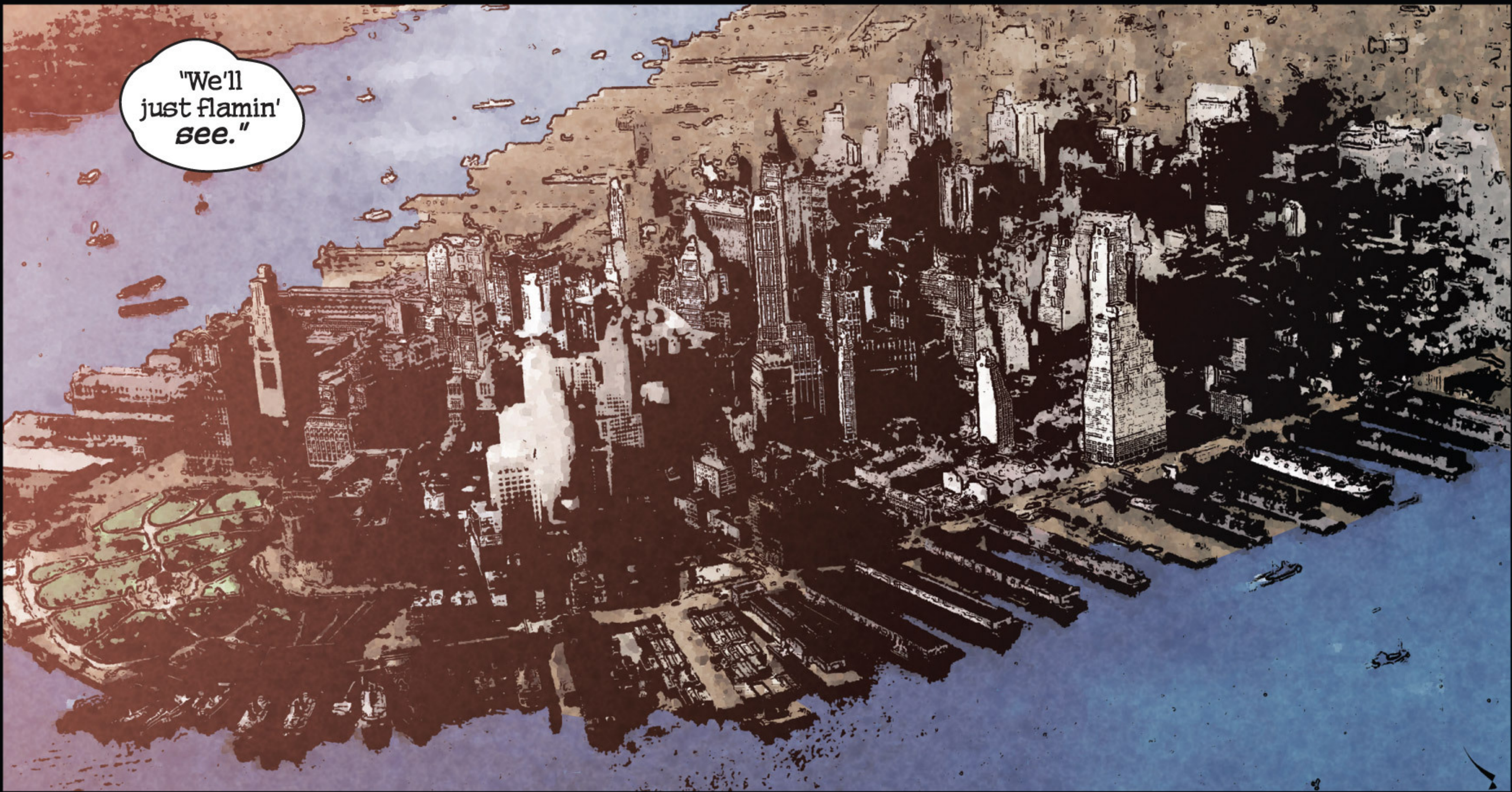
--and much more *deceased* brother, Robert.

To the point, I think, that we must ask ourselves...which twin really *died* back on Welfare Island in the fight against Detective Magnus all those months ago?



Yeah?

We'll see about that, Charley.





But you've got to believe me, it's *not* my fault--



I'll decide what is and isn't your fault!

Now tell me what you've gone and *screwed up* before I rip your head off--



When--Kitty and I brought the gem home--

We saw-- There was a *crack* in it--

--It's a *fake* too, Robert! *Glass!*



Cain must have hid the *real* one--Somewhere *else*--

No--No! ~~That's not possible~~

You and the little ~~thing~~ have hid it somewhere!

You're trying to *cheat* me!







Now that she's been flushed out...and *down*...

...don't worry about the gem, Wanda.

That *is* the original, even with the crack.

You mean... the original is... *glass*?



"Sure. What the hell are Madripoor tribesmen going to do with a quote-unquote '*precious*' stone in the middle of the jungle?"

"The gem's only true value is in its religious and political significance."

"Looked like glass to me when I first lay eyes on it back in Madripoor, but I saw no reason to *advertise* it."



But then you knew that all along, didn't you...

...Professor?



Thought I stalled long enough for you to get here.

I suppose one day I'll learn to stop underestimating you, Mr. Hallows.



You don't really care about the gem, or Senator Kelly's attempts to woo Prince Baran, do you?

This is about me.

You were trying to draw me out. Wanda was working for you all along.

Darling, I never--

Give it a rest, Wanda.

Your *altruism* makes you as much of a deviant as the anti-social tendencies of a *criminal*, Mr. Halloway.

After our initial encounter, I realized there could be a whole new pathology at work here-- "*heropathy*."

Your connection to my half-brother was something I could exploit.

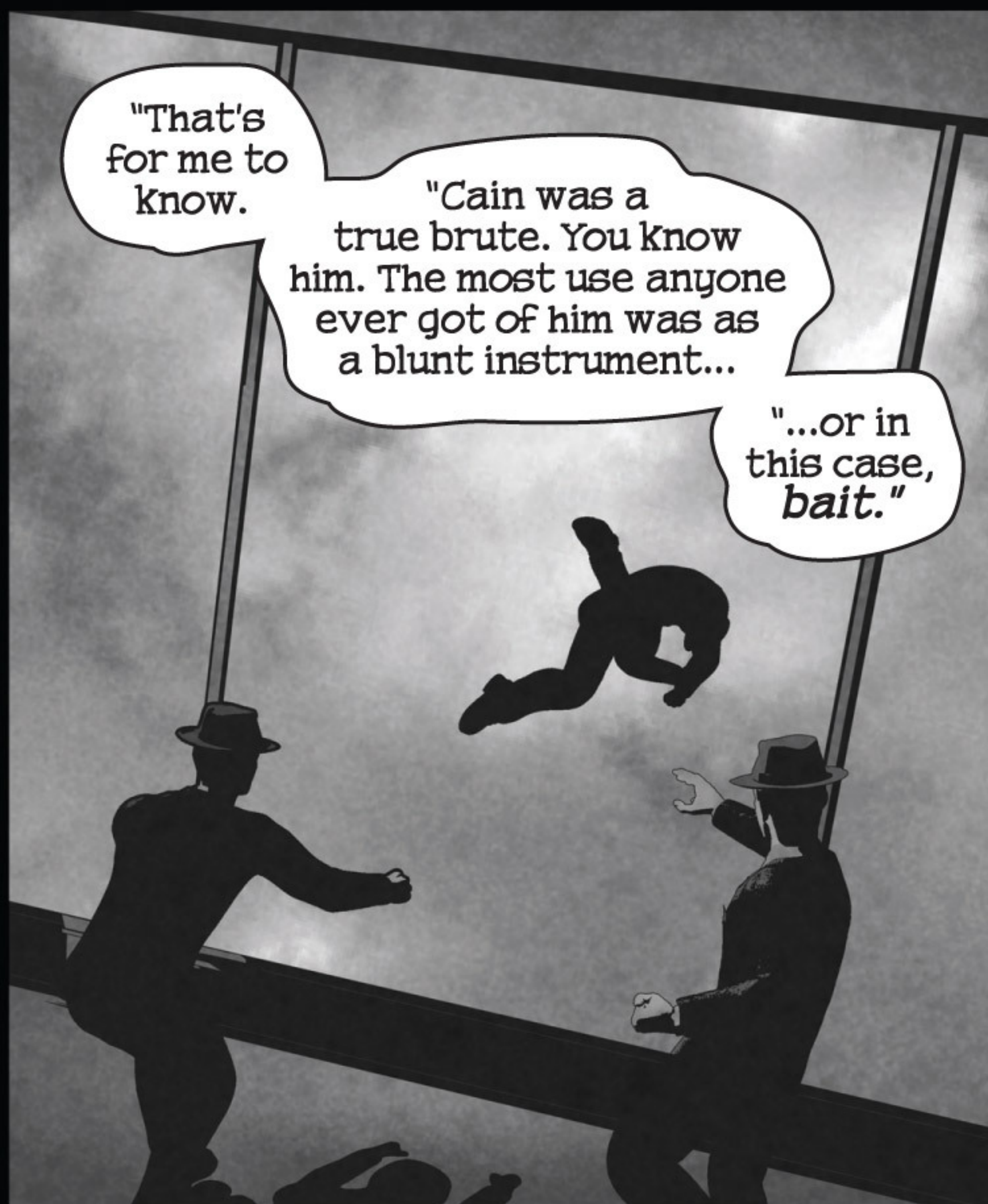
Did he have *help*, going over the side of the Dirigi-carrier?



"That's for me to know.

"Cain was a true brute. You know him. The most use anyone ever got of him was as a blunt instrument...

"...or in this case, *bait*."



I can learn as much--if not more--by studying *angels* as demons.

But you disappointed me, Halloway. My hypothesis was that you were a compulsive hero, and nothing I could do to you would change that essential nature.

Instead...you corrupted much faster than I ever could have imagined.



Oh, you mean turning me into Robert?

Well.

About that.



I was faking.

F.B.I.!!
Don't move!

You heard
that man confess
to the murder of
Cain Marko, formerly
of Madripoor.

That woman,
Wanda Magnus, is
his accomplice.

Miss Pryde,
over there on
the floor, has
six outstanding
warrants in three
jurisdictions.



In order
to reduce his
parole violation, I
imagine Professor X will
want to sing to Director
Duncan about a secret
illegal Federal agency
competing with the
Bureau.

But now,
if you'll excuse
me...



"...I have a promise to keep."

You will have no contact with other prisoners.

And almost none with the staff.



You are not allowed writing materials. Or to receive visitors or communication from the outside.

A guard will let you out in your own private exercise yard for an hour a day, weather permitting.



Thus have I described the last remaining days of your life as foreign criminals interred here in Genosha Bay Penitentiary.

And I must say you look sunnier than most upon hearing me do so, Captain.

Oh...it's nothin', Warden Frost.

I gotta kinda...*Providence* watching over me.

So has every con who ever crawled in here thinking he was going to slither out.

A full-page comic book illustration of Superman flying over a city. He is shown from the waist up, angled towards the right, with his head bowed and eyes closed. His blue suit and red cape are clearly visible. The city below is rendered in a stylized, blocky manner with various buildings and structures. The sky is a light blue with some white clouds.

"Yeah... 'cept
I got a better
reason than most
to believe in mine.

"*My* angel
did everything he
could to bring in the
murderers of a guy
who trained him
to fight...

"...a guy
whose last act
of friendship was
to betray him.

"I got *reason*
to have *faith* in him.
Faith he's *never* gonna
forget about me
an' Judd.

"So good
luck keepin' us
here, Warden, that's
all I'm sayin'. Good
flamin' luck.

"You're
gonna *need*
it."

END